Khmer (Cambodian) belongs to the Mon-Khmer language family and is the official language of Cambodia where it is spoken by approximately 5 million people. It is also spoken in various dialects by another 400 thousand people in the provinces of Buriram, Surin, and Srisaket in northeastern Thailand and 450 thousand in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. Historically, word intial voiced and voiceless stops neutralized in Khmer, causing a register difference between normal and "breathy" vowels. Western dialects of Khmer maintain this register distinction, but it is not always clear what vocal quality is responsible for the register distinction as it varies from speaker to speaker. While Western dialects maintained the register distinctions, the other dialects of Khmer further evolved and the register distinction became a vowel quality distinction. Thus, the standard dialect(s) of Khmer exhibit between 25 and 28 distinct vowel / diphthong phonemes and the Northern dialect exhibits no less than 31.

The speaker here is a male from Phnom Penh.

Modern Standard Khmer Consonant Phonemes:

Stops:	p	t	c	k	ʔ
	p^h	t^h	c^h	k^h	
	b	d			
Fricatives:				h	
Nasals:	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	
Liquids:		l			
Glides:	ʋ		j	w	

Of the stops, only the unaspirated, unvoiced ones may occur word finally and all are unreleased. /k/ and /ʔ/ are not heavily contrasted and are neutralized in some environments and in some dialects. [b] and [d] are implosive, although this quality disappears in higher social registers of speech. In consonant clusters with sonorants the aspirated / unaspirated distinction is neutralized in favour of aspiration. When an aspirated stop is directly followed by a vowel, it may be more correct to transcribe it a two segments [kh], becuase in Khmer, it is possible to seperate the two with an infix.

Consonants Encountered:

Stops:	p	t	c	k	ʔ
	p^h	t^h	c^h	k^h	
	b	d			
Nasals:	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	
Liquids:		l			
		ɾ			
Glides:			j	w	

Modern Standard Khmer Vowel & Diphthong Phonemes:

There is very little agreement on exactly how many vowels / diphthongs there are in Khmer or what they are. Presented below are 3 systems, the first two with quality contrasts, the third describing a register contrast. [ˇ] denotes a short diphthong.

From <u>Modern Spoken Cambodian</u> by Franklin Huffman:

i(:)	ɨ(:)	u(:)		iə̝	iə̝	uə̝ uə̆
e(:)	ə(:)	o(:)		ej eə̆	əɨ	ow oə̆
ɛ:		ɔ:				ɔə̝
	a(:)	ɑ(:)			aɛ̝ aə̝ aw	

From <u>International Encyclopedia of Linguistics</u>:

Battambang dialect (typical):

Long nuclei:
iː		ɯː		uː
ie̝		ɯə̝		uo̝
ee̝	ɛɛ̝	ʌə	ɔo	oo̝
	aɛ̝	aʌ	aɔ̝	
	aː		ɒː	

Short nuclei:
ɪ		ʏ		ŭə ʊ
	ĕa		ŏa	
ɛ		ʌ		ɔ
	a		ŏa	

Surin dialect (North):

Long nuclei:
iə̝ iː		ɯə̝ ɯː		uə̝ uː
ɪː		ʏː		ʊː
eː		əː		oː
ɛː		ʌː		ɔː
	aː		ɒː	

Short nuclei:
iă̆ i		ɯă̆ ɯ	uă̆ u
(ɪ)		(ʏ)	(ʊ) - non-contrastive
e		ə	o
ɛ		ʌ	ɔ
	a		ɒ

From <u>Introduction to Cambodian</u> by Judith Jacob:

First Register:
iə	uːə ɯə
	ʏ ʏj ʏː
eː	o(:)

	ε	ɔ(ː)			
	ae	ɑ(ː) ɑw ɑʊ ɑə			

Second Register: ĭə ĭːə ĭ(ː)   ṳːə ṳ(ː) ṳ̀ə ṳ̀(ː) ṳ̀ə

                                              ɤ̀ː ɤ̀u

                        è(ː) èj   ò̤ː

                        è̤ː è̤ə   ò̤ː ò̤ə

It seems that this speaker is of a dialect that maintains the register distinction and I believe it is this distinction that is transcribed as nasalization below. Please note that these transcriptions are quite broad.

Three Way Stop Contrasts:

1.	[kɑʔ]	'to shampoo'
2.	[kʰɑʔ]	'to choke'
3.	[kʰæ̃t̚]	'to polish'
4.	[kæ̃t̚]	'to cut'
5.	[kʰiɔn]	'flowered, cotton, material'
6.	[kiɔn]	'on the side'
7.	[cɑː]	'to go'
8.	[cʰɛw]	'to stand'
9.	[cãj̃ʔ]	'to divide'
10.	[cʰãj̃ʔ]	'to check'
11.	[tɔp̚]	'to support'
12.	[tʰɔp̚]	'to be suffocating'
13.	[dæ̃p̚]	'to cut with a chisel'
14.	[dɤ̃ŋ]	'to know'
15.	[tɤ̃ŋ]	'tight, tense'
18.	[tʰɑŋ]	'bag'
19.	[dawi]	'to be like'
20.	[tawi]	'small'
21.	[tʰoːˠ]	'jar'
22.	[bɒːŋ]	'elder sibling'
23.	[pɑːŋ]	'to wish, desire'
24.	[pʰɑːŋ]	'also, too'
25.	[bãj̃ʔ]	'to break'
26.	[pãj̃ʔ]	'part, section'
28.	[paʔ]	'to embroider'
29.	[baʔ]	'to be broken'
30.	[pʰæ̃ːʔ]	'fine (penalty)'

Double Stops:

1.	[ʔat̚]	'not'
2.	[kæ̃t̚]	'cut'
3.	[kʔæt̚]	'kind of frog'
4.	[cæ̃t̚]	'send off'

5.	[kʰæt̚]	'polish'
6.	[kʰcæt̚]	'seperated'
7.	[cãp]	'get to the end'
8.	[kʰɑm]	'try hard'
9.	[kʰcãp]	'pack'
10.	[bɑn]	'celebration'
11.	[kɑn]	'movie'
12.	[kbɔːˀn]	'raft'
13.	[dæ:m]	'running' (colour)
14.	[kæ:m]	'passion'
15.	[kdæ:m]	'crab'
16.	[tij]	'place'
17.	[kʰæ:ŋ]	'side'
18.	[kʰtɪŋ]	'wild buffalo'
19.	[tæ:ŋ]	'represent'
20.	[ba:n]	'get'
21.	[tba:ŋ]	'weave'
22.	[kɑl]	'support'
23.	[tʰɑ:t]	'take out'
24.	[tʰkɑl]	'be still'
25.	[kæn]	'hold'
26.	[tʰæ:]	'say'
27.	[tʰkæŋtʰkæn]	'civilized'
28.	[dɤŋ]	'know'
29.	[pɤn]	'be skillful'
30.	[pdɤŋ]	'accuse'
31.	[dɤj]	'ground'
32.	[pɤj]	'musical instrument'
33.	[pdɤj]	'husband'
34.	[kæp]	'dig'
35.	[pʰæt]	'drift'
36.	[pʰkæp]	'upside down'
37.	[bɯl]	'ball'
38.	[cah]	'to be old'
39.	[cbah]	'clear'
40.	[ba:n]	'obtain'
41.	[cæŋ]	'be glaring'
42.	[cbæŋ]	'fight'
43.	[kæe̞]	'correct'
44.	[cʰkæe̞ʔ]	'make a cut in'
45.	[cʰkæe̞]	'dog'
46.	[ʔo:]	'explaination'
47.	[cʰaw]	'raw'
48.	[cʰʔaw]	'very red'
49.	[bɤ:t]	'suck'
50.	[dʌt]	'stick'
51.	[dbʌt]	'because'
52.	[cɑŋ]	'want to'
53.	[pʰɑŋ]	'dust, powder'

54.	[pʰcaŋ]	'concentrate'
55.	[caʔ]	'peck'
56.	[pʰaʔ]	'drink'
57.	[pʰcaʔ]	'kind of tree'
58.	[dodɑl]	'arrive'
59.	[pʰɑl]	'result'
60.	[pʰdɑl]	'provide'
61.	[dæːn]	'trace'
62.	[pʰæt']	'sprinkle'
63.	[pʰdæ̃m]	'remember'
64.	[pəteːh]	'country'
65.	[pʰeh]	'ash'
66.	[pʰtej]	'change'
67.	[ʔæ̃ʔ]	'unable to go'
68.	[pʰæːʔ]	'fine (penalty)'
69.	[pʰʔæːʔ]	'cause'

Final [h]:

1.	[bʌntoːʷ]	'musical refrain'
2.	[bʌntoːh]	'scold'
3.	[bʌntæː]	'thorn'
4.	[bʌnlæ̃h]	'change of clothes'
5.	[kɾɑʷ]	'poor'
6.	[kɾɪmkɾɑh]	'dried hard'
7.	[kɾuːə]	'family'
8.	[kɾuəh]	'event'
9.	[kʰlæː]	'tiger'
10.	[kʰlæ̃h]	'some'
11.	[cɒʷ]	'dog' (year)
12.	[cah]	'make hole in'
13.	[cuːə]	'rude'
14.	[cuːəh]	'replace'
15.	[dæː]	'slab of stone'
16.	[dæːh]	'spread out'
17.	[mujnæː]	'which one?'
18.	[næ̃h]	'very'
19.	[toːʷ]	'second'
20.	[toh]	'guilt'

References:

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