

The opening ceremony of the Africa Cup of Nations 2025 highlighted colorful performances, including tributes to the unity, identity and unwavering resilience of African football. It was an immersive and choreographed journey where light was the common thread connecting cultures, generations, and dreams, as well as a celebration of “Morocco, Land of Football” and Africa as a continent that embraces its diversity with strength and pride.

The presence of Crown Prince Moulay El Hassan, who officially inaugurated the competition alongside Motsepe and Infantino, added ceremonial weight to the evening. The Comoros President Azali Assoumani was also in attendance, highlighting the continental significance of the occasion.

The 35th edition of the CAF Africa Cup of Nations burst into life on Sunday night in Rabat with an outstanding opening ceremony that blended music, movement and symbolism, setting an emphatic tone for a month-long celebration of African football in Morocco.

Played out before a sold-out capacity crowd at the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium and watched by millions on television across the globe, the ceremony unfolded moments before hosts Morocco faced Comoros in the tournament’s opening match.

It offered a vivid reminder that AFCON is as much a cultural showcase as it is a sporting contest.

The ceremony opened with a calm yet evocative musical sequence, fusing African rhythms with traditional Moroccan sounds.

Performers moved in carefully choreographed patterns across a pitch transformed by colour and light, reflecting the continent’s diversity and football heritage.

A central figure carrying a football-shaped map symbolised Africa’s unity, while Amazigh-inspired music underscored Morocco’s identity and deep historical roots.

Visual projections drew inspiration from Moroccan zellige patterns and artisanal crafts, while giant screens showcased everyday life, education, landscapes and iconic cities including Fez, Casablanca and Marrakech.

Music took centre stage as global stars French Montana, Davido, L’Artiste and Jaylann delivered uplifting performances that energised the crowd and resonated with international audiences, reinforcing AFCON’s growing global appeal.

FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, delivered an address in which he expressed his thanks to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist Him, “for having welcomed us in Morocco, this beautiful country, of football, passion and peace” and for having united Africa and the World through this happy event.

He also wished good luck to the 24 countries taking part in this Africa Cup of Nations, which will be “the most beautiful Africa Cup of Nations in history.”

In a similar address, CAF President, Patrice Motsepe, expressed, on behalf of CAF and its member Federations, his thanks to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist Him, and to HRH Crown Prince Moulay El Hassan.

He also expressed his gratitude to Moroccans for their love of football, welcoming African and international fans who will be watching the continent’s best football and performances by Africa’s top players.

“We in Africa are committed to making football a unifying force for people,” he said, adding that Morocco and Africa showed the world what they are capable of during the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

As fireworks faded and the stadium roared, AFCON 2025 was formally launched – not just as a football tournament, but as a celebration of African identity, culture and unity.

With matches set to be staged across six Moroccan cities until January 18, the continent’s biggest sporting event could scarcely have asked for a more fitting opening.

Morocco began their CAF Africa Cup of Nations tournament with a controlled 2-0 victory over Comoros



The first goal of the match was scored by Brahim Diaz in the 55th minute, before Ayoub El Kaabi doubled the lead with a spectacular acrobatic overhead kick in the 74th minute.

Thanks to this victory, Morocco provisionally takes the lead in Group A with 3 points.

The second match in the group will see Mali take on Zambia on Monday (3:00 p.m.

Moroccan time) at the Mohammed V Stadium in Casablanca.

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