

# Maradona's childhood home now feeds the poor



Volunteers chop chicken before cooking a stew for residents of the neighbourhood of Villa Fiorito at a soup kitchen set up in the house where the late Diego Maradona spent his early childhood, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. (Reuters)

**Buenos Aires:** Every week, hundreds of people line up to fill a plastic container with food in an unlikely place: the humble home where Argentine legend Diego Armando Maradona was born.

The house in Villa Fiorito, a poor neighborhood on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, no longer belongs to the family of Maradona, who died in 2020 after a heart attack, but for the last month, its current owner has lent its dirt yard to a group of volunteers who light a grill and cook for neighbours.

Last Thursday, Maria Torres stirred a stew in two large pots while several others peeled potatoes and chopped

pieces of chicken.

Food options include bread and a beverage to fully cooked and nutritional meals.

A mural painted on the house's facade depicts the player next to the words, "The house of god".

Poverty has been trending downward in Argentina, with official statistics showing it dropping to 31.6 per cent in the first half of 2025 from 52.9 per cent in the first half of 2024, when President Javier Milei sharply devalued the peso and inflation spiked.

While there has been a "very important drop" in poverty, Argentina needs to see more GDP growth in labour-intensive sectors, such

as mining, as opposed to capital-intensive sectors, such as agriculture, said Eduardo Donza, a sociologist at the Catholic University of Argentina.

The drop in the poverty rate has followed a substantial drop in monthly inflation, from double digits when Milei took office to 2.9 per cent in February.

However, Milei's austerity measures have sharply diminished the public sector workforce and many say they have lost purchasing power as the government has cut transportation and energy subsidies.

Leonardo Fabian Alvarez, a pastor who runs the make-

shift soup kitchen, said he has seen the demand for food in Villa Fiorito and other neighbourhoods grow as small factories have closed.

Deregulation and a stronger peso have led to cheaper imports under Milei.

"People obviously lost their jobs," he said, adding that "they come to the line, pick up food, take what we give them."

Under President Milei, inflation has decreased, though austerity measures and public sector cuts have impacted many citizens' purchasing power.

Argentina declared the home of Maradona a national historic site in 2021. Reuters