

## Bhojpuri-speaking people demand separate state

Hundreds of Bhojpuri-speaking people gathered in Bihar's Sasaram town to demand creation of a separate state for those who speak the regional dialect.

Meeting under the aegis of the 21st All India Bhojpuri Sahitya Sammelan they demanded Sunday the creation of a separate state and protection of the interests of the people speaking Bhojpuri.

'A resolution to demand for creation of a separate Bhojpuri state was passed unopposed in the meet,' a member of the Bhojpuri meet said.

They said they would launch a campaign to mobilise support and build a strong lobby to put pressure on the government for a separate state.

According to the agenda paper, the proposed separate Bhojpuri state would consist of 32 districts spread over Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. 'We have come out with a proposed map of a separate Bhojpuri state,' a member said.

Two central ministers Raghuvansh Prasad Singh and Meira Kumar attended the inaugural ceremony of the meet on Saturday. Singh promised that the issue would be raised in parliament. The meet was attended by retired professors, bureaucrats, journalists and artists.

Over 270 million people are estimated to speak and understand Bhojpuri. There is a large Bhojpuri diaspora based in countries like Mauritius, Ghana, West Indies, Fiji, Nepal, Dubai, Indonesia, and the Netherlands.

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