

# Amazon removes India flag doormats after visa threat

NEW DELHI - Amazon said Thursday it has withdrawn doormats featuring Indian flag from sale after New Delhi called them "insulting" and threatened to expel the company's foreign workers.

Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj tweeted late Wednesday that the mats, available only on Amazon's Canadian site, were an "unacceptable" insult to the national flag and demanded an apology.

On Thursday the company said it had responded by removing them from sale.

"We have removed the products from the website following the Indian demand," said a company spokeswoman who asked not to be named.

Swaraj, an avid tweeter with nearly seven million followers, issued her ultimatum after a Twitter user sent her a screengrab of the doormats on sale.

"Amazon must tender unconditional apology. They must withdraw all products insulting our national flag immediately," she tweeted.

"If this is not done forthwith, we will not grant Indian Visa to any Amazon official. We will also rescind the Visas issued earlier."

Amazon has made steady inroads in India since entering the competitive but rapidly-growing e-commerce market in 2013 with a pledge to invest \$5 billion over six years. The e-retailer found itself in similar trouble last year over doormats showing Hindu deities being sold on its US website.

**Source:** AFP