

New Record for World's Largest Diamond?

A South African mining company claims to have found the world's largest diamond ever. The 7,000 carat stone was found in the northwest region. It has a greenish tint, and although it initially appeared to be industrial grade, it was then thought that it could be used for jewelry. A 7,000 carat stone would be more than twice as big as the Cullinan, which was a 3,106 carat diamond discovered near Pretoria in 1905, the largest gem-quality rough diamond ever found.

The Star of Africa, the largest cut from the Cullinan, is 530 carats and now set in a scepter. The Star of Africa lost the cut stone record in 1985 to the Golden Jubilee, 545 carats and also found at the same mine.

The insured value of the stone was \$1.25 million when it left South Africa to be presented as a gift to King Edward in 1907. The stone was sent to Amsterdam where it was studied for several months and then cut into nine major pieces, as well as 96 smaller brilliants. The nine pieces are all on view with the British Crown Jewels at the Tower of London, or in the personal possession of the Royal Family.

Information regarding the new discovery has been scarce and many have expressed skepticism, noting that gems are generally not found in the region, and that green stones are more rare. Ernest Blom, president of World Diamond Bourses, withdrew from the verification process this week, citing that his requests for a viewing had not been met. Cullinan's place as record holder now looks to be secure, as new reports suggest that the diamond may be a fluorite crystal.

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