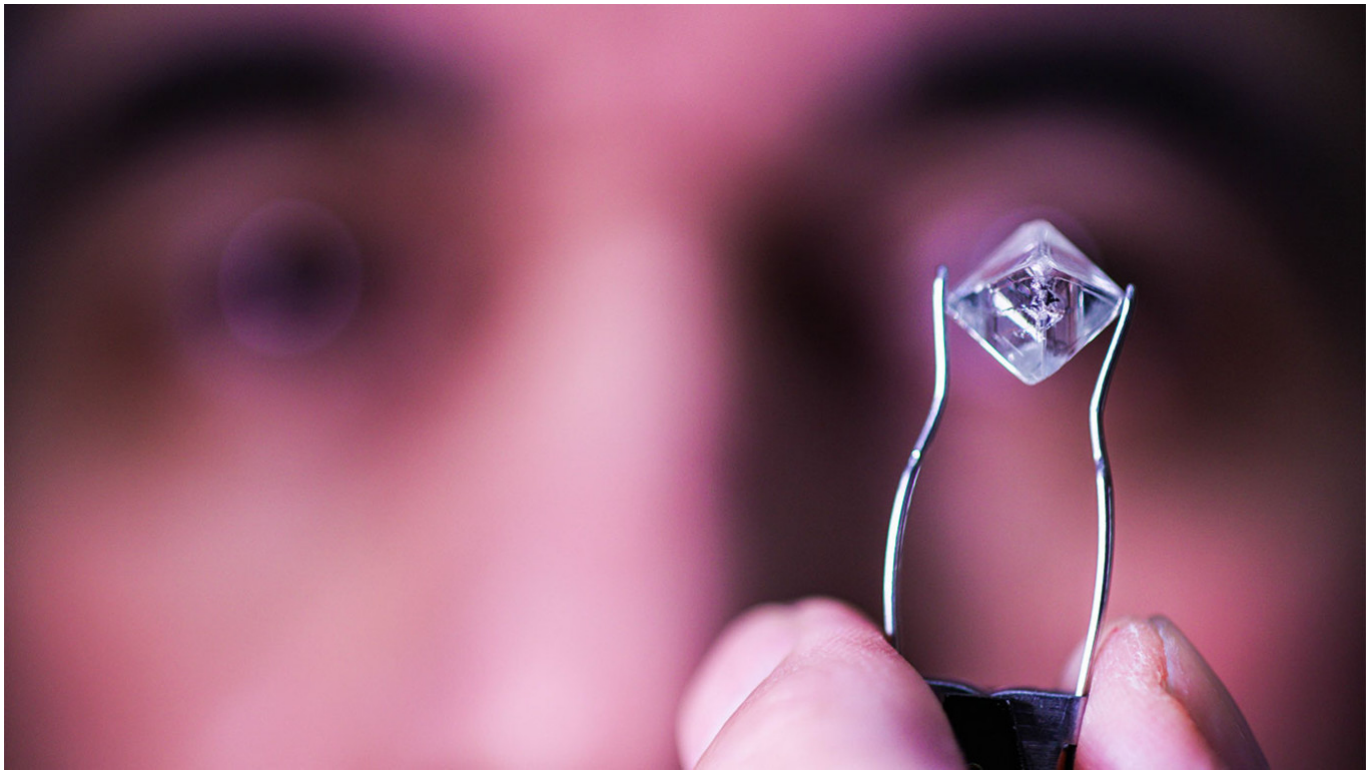
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Kremlin Says Russia Will Circumvent EU Diamond Import Ban

By AFP

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Diamond crystal on the production line of Kristall Production Corporation in Smolensk. **Vladimir Smirnov / TASS**

The Kremlin on Tuesday vowed to circumvent a European Union import ban on Russian diamonds, part of another sanctions package brought by the West over Moscow's large-scale military operation in Ukraine.

Western countries have brought an unprecedented campaign of financial and economic penalties against Russia in response to the Kremlin's decision to attempt to topple the government in Kyiv last year and take over Ukraine.

"On the whole, the 12th package shows that, perhaps, the pool of sectors where sanctions can be imposed is being exhausted," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

The European Union on Monday adopted the new package of sanctions that include an import

ban on Russian diamonds.

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The ban covers natural and synthetic varieties including in jewelry from January, and Russian diamonds cut in other countries from September next year.

Moscow is accused of helping to fill its war chest with proceeds from diamond sales, which are worth an estimated $4 billion to $5 billion a year.

Peskov said the ban was "predictable" and that Moscow would find ways to limit the impact of the move from Brussels.

"I do not think that there are no options to circumvent these sanctions. They exist, and they will be implemented," Peskov said.

The sanctions package also extends EU efforts to restrict technology Moscow can get its hands on for military purposes, adding 29 more companies to a list of entities prohibited from exporting products able to help Russia's arms industry.

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