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Bryan: Don't Expect Nightclubs, Bars to Reopen Until Feb-March 2021 at the Earliest

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Ernice Gilbert **September 22, 2020**

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The Starlight Lounge & Nightclub on St. Croix held its grand opening event late 2017. Governor Bryan said Monday that nightclubs and bars should expect to be closed until Feb.-March 2021 because of the pandemic. By. THE STARLIGHT LOUNGE AND NIGHTCLUB

Virgin Islanders longing for fetes should assimilate to the new norms caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, as bars and nightclubs are not expected to be cleared for reopening until February-March of 2021 at the earliest.

That's according to Governor Albert Bryan, speaking during his Monday Covid-19 press briefing where he attempted to set the expectation relative to the reauthorization of mass gatherings in the

territory.

Mr. Bryan said while the administration has been looking at protocols on how to reopen those establishments, it would be a while before clubbing and other similar events are allowed.

"Opening up this time I can definitely say that that's not something we're going to implement immediately," Mr. Bryan said, adding that the administration may need to have a conversation with nightclub and bar owners on how the government could assist with subsidizing bills as those establishments remain closed. Relative to bars, Mr. Bryan said his administration has been looking at ways to allow bar service without having individuals congregate at the bar, but those plans were still being discussed.

"Realistically, I don't see anybody being in a nightclub in the Virgin Islands until at least February, best-case scenario. That environment is not conducive to stopping the spread. That would actually be a super-spreader environment. You have air-conditioned environment, people jammed closely together, a lot of alcohol involved — we just can't afford that right now," he said.

The governor added, "I don't think this is just a Virgin Islands problem, it's a global problem so we don't have all the answers. But direct bar service and nightclubs, February-March best-case scenario."

Mr. Bryan elaborated on the new norm. "The world has changed; I really think people need to start looking at alternatives to the world as we know it, and how it used to be. I don't think we'll ever be the same again; this will not be our last pandemic, trust you that. So expect a lot of changes that we've done to become permanent overtime. That's just the brave new reality that we live with, and let's all pray that we don't see a new pandemic this year again."