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Monday Digest: Cracks in Democratic Party Majority; High-Speed Chase on St. Croix Following Buck-Island Shooting, Brawl; and 19-Year Dies Following Car Crash

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Collage of the 34th Legislature's majority caucus, excluding Javan James

Welcome to the 18th edition of the Monday Digest, where we provide you with excerpts of stories that occurred over the weekend to help you start Mondays informed. We'd given the Digest a break for the holidays, but we're back.

Also, our app is an absolute essential if you fancy getting your VI news as it happens. Download [here](#).

Here's what you need to know:

Cracks in Democratic Party Majority of the 34th Legislature

Sen. Javan James has left the Democratic Party and the Majority Caucus in the upcoming 34th Legislature. Mr. James cited future potential for ["turmoil and chaos"](#) in the majority as his reasons for abandoning ship.

Additionally, Sen. Kenneth Gittens, [recently announced](#) as incoming Senate Majority Leader, will no longer hold the position, according to people familiar with the matter. It will instead be held by Sen. Marvin Blyden, who served as majority leader during the 33rd Legislature. The new body will be sworn in today.

High-Speed Chase on St. Croix Preceded by Shooting, Brawl on Buck Island

A high-speed chase on the east end of St. Croix was preceded by [a shooting and fight](#) on the federally-controlled Buck Island, V.I.P.D. Public Information Officer Toby Derima confirmed to the Consortium Sunday evening. Involved in the hunt to bring into custody those involved were multiple law enforcement arms both local and federal, including the V.I.P.D., the Dept. of Planning and Natural Resources, the Park Service Rangers, and the Coast Guard, according to reports. A video of the fight can be viewed [here](#).

19-Year-Old Man is Dead Following Vehicular Accident

Identified by next of kin as Joseph Santana of Sugar Estate, St. Thomas, the young man [lost control](#) of the vehicle during the wee hours of Sunday — a gray 2011 Toyota Corolla — and slammed into a WAPA utility pole, which led to an [island-wide power outage](#).

In other news, a man was jailed after [admitting to raping an intoxicated woman](#) during a house party on St. Croix; the U.S. Small Business Administration in consultation with the U.S. Treasury Department, [announced Friday](#) that the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) will re-open the week of January 11 for new borrowers and certain existing PPP borrowers; Human Services shuts down [Head Start on St. Croix](#) and [Knud Hansen Complex in St. Thomas](#) after employees test positive for Covid-19; Governor Bryan says VI residents should start seeing Congress-funded stimulus checks in their mailboxes [in three weeks](#); and [calls](#) for President Donald Trump's impeachment grow.

The 17th edition of the Monday Digest is [here](#).