Bhangu likely to run for B.C. Conservative leadership

Matthew Claxton

Langley-Abbotsford MLA Harman Bhangu says he will likely run for leadership of the B.C. Conservatives in the wake of John Rustad stepping down from the role.

Bhangu said that over the holidays he met with friends, family and people from across the province, and his family is supportive of him running for leader.

"I am strongly considering it, and I'm pretty sure I will be," he said.



B.C. Conservative Party leader John Rustad (right) speaks to reporters in the B.C. Legislature on Sept. 22, 2025, as Langley-Abbotsford MLA Harman Bhangu looks on. (Mark Page/Black Press Media)

The party has been led by interim leader Trevor Halford since Rustad resigned on Dec. 4, following a dramatic confrontation with his own MLAs. Out of the 39 caucus members, 20 had called for him to step down.

Bhangu previously said he would not run if his friend, Conservative MP Aaron Gunn, chose to vie for the position, but just before Christmas, Gunn ruled out leaving federal politics right now.

Bhangu worked in the trucking industry and has served as the B.C. Conservatives critic for transportation.

If he runs, he said he will be focused on economic issues.

"We need to get the entrepreneurial spirit going again," Bhangu said, mentioning issues such as the industrial carbon tax, cost-of-living issues, and young people leaving B.C. to find jobs elsewhere.

Asked if he would reach out to the five former Conservative MLAs who left the party or were ejected under Rustad, Bhangu said he would talk to them.

"I think Elenore (Sturko) is great at what she does," he said.

Bhangu said he would see where it was possible to mend fences.

If he becomes leader, Bhangu said he would be prepared for a possible snap election triggered by the governing NDP in 2026.

He said he has good support for the fundraising the party would need for another election contest.

A final decision on running will wait until he sees the rules for a leadership race, which he expects sometime in mid-January.

"I know going in there will be a spotlight (on) are the memberships real or fake," Bhangu said, referring to the attempt to create fake party members during the last leadership contest.

Abbotsford records third consecutive mild December

Ben Lypka

According to data from Environment Canada, December has seemingly transformed into a relatively mild month for Abbotsford residents over the past three years.

This past December continued a yearly trend starting in 2023 in which the mean temperature for the month finished above 5 C.

2025 saw a mean temperature of 5.9 C, while 2024 was 5.6 C and 2023 was a sweltering 6.1 C. Temperatures dipped to a mean temperature of -0.3 C in 2022 and 0.1 C in 2021.

The Abbotsford Airport weather station, which has historical data from 2012 had never recorded a December above 5 C before 2023.

Looking back at data from the nearby Mission West Abbey weather station, prior to the past three years there were only three other Decembers that finished above 5 C over the past 50 years.

Only the years of 1991 (5 C), 1979 (5.1 C) and 1976 (5.4 C) cracked 5 C and none of those months were as warm on average as any of the past three Decembers.



The sun beats down on joggers at Abbotsford's Exhibition Stadium during a balmy winter afternoon. (Ben Lypka/Abbotsford News)

December 2025 featured 12 days with a daily high temperature of 10 C or more and the daily low dipped into the negatives just six times. The daily mean temperature was in the negatives just twice for the month. It was also the second straight December that there was zero total snow in Abbotsford. 2023 saw a total of two millimetres of snow fall on Dec. 9. A total of 41.6 mm snow fell in 2022.

Another big story related to weather last month was the amount of total rain that fell.

A total of 295.8 millimetres were recorded last month, which was the most since 1998 when 354 mm was recorded at the Mission West Abbey weather station.

Rain last month caused significant flooding in several parts of Abbotsford and led to the closure of both Highway 1 and the Sumas-Huntingdon border crossing.

Early-January numbers are continuing the warmer winter weather trend, as four days into the month the mean temperature currently sits at 5 C.

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