Exploring Condensed Matter Physics at Extreme Pressure

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Abstract:Materials in our daily lives occur at ambient conditions. However, most materials in the universe exist in extreme pressure up to hundreds of gigapascals via self compression induced by naturally-occuring gravitational force. Physics and chemistry of matter at extreme pressures can be drastically different from those at ambient conditions. In this presentation, I will use three "most abundant elements" as examples to highlight new perspectives of condensed matter physics at high pressure: (1). Hydrogen, the most abundant and perhaps simple element of the universe: molecular hydrogen transitioning to near-room temperature superconducting hydrides;

(2). Nitrogen, the most abundant element in the atmosphere: triple bonded nitrogen (N≡N) transforming to single-bonded hexazine (N-N in N₆ ring);

(3). Iron, the most abundant transition metal of the planet: heat conduction of iron generating thermal energy to power the planet's magnetic field.