

次の文章は、2019年3月31日に THE JAPAN NEWS by Yomiuri Shimbun に掲載された “Work style reform must bring end to practice of long hours on the job” という見出しの記事である。これを読み、以下の設問に答えよ。なお、\*のついた語句には注がある。

It is an urgent task to rectify\* the practice of working long hours and develop an environment in which diverse human resources can play active roles in society, amid\* a shrinking workforce.

Revised laws related to work style reform will come into force from Monday in stages. The focus of the first stage is to establish an upper limit — enforced with penalties — on overtime working hours, which have been practically unlimited. This regulation will first be applied to major companies.

(1) The common practice of working long hours [ difficult / both / made / it / to handle / has / work ] and child-rearing or nursing care, and has led to tragic cases of *karoshi*, or death from overwork. Reviewing the practice is likely to encourage women and elderly people to join the workforce and help maintain the nation's social and economic vitality. Diversifying the workforce is also important to enhance companies' creativity.

The upper limit on overtime work is based on the so-called *karoshi line*, a critical point for determining ① cases of death from overwork. Such a basis has been set out of consideration for temporary increases in workloads. (2) This does not mean overwork up to the limit can be justified. Companies should strive to reduce overtime as much as possible.

At the same time, they are urged to improve productivity by eliminating wasteful operations and utilizing information technology to break away from ② management practices that rely on long working hours. Such efforts likely will raise their potential for growth. It is also desirable for them to take measures to maintain wage levels for employees ( A ) using overtime reductions to curb\* labor costs.

#### Oversight system needed

From fiscal\* 2020, new overtime regulations will be applied also to small and midsize companies. It will be no easy task for companies plagued\* by labor shortages to meet the regulations. The government needs to expand assistance to small and midsize companies to ensure smooth implementation of the new rules.

Relationships with clients that push companies to ( B ) severe deadlines are also a factor behind an increase in overtime work. It is imperative to make business ③ terms and practices appropriate. A guidance and oversight system must be strengthened.

Under the related laws, companies are obliged to have their employees take at least five paid holidays\* a year. The laws also ④ oblige companies to make efforts to introduce an

“interval system” to ensure a certain period of time between the end of one work shift and the start of the next. The system would be effective in ( C ) employees healthy and boosting their motivation.

A “highly professional” work system, in which high-income earners in some specialist professions are exempt ( D ) working-hour regulations, will also be launched.

(3) In an increasing number of jobs, such as planning and development work, hours do not directly correspond to performance. It is reasonable for working hours to be separated from pay, depending on job categories.

Concern that such a system could force people to work longer remains strong, but its application requires obtaining their consent. Companies are required to take measures to ensure the good health of their employees subject to the system. It is important to operate the system appropriately.

A system of equal pay for equal work, one of the main pillars of the work style reform, will be implemented in stages from fiscal 2020. A scheme in which treatment and conditions between regular and non-regular workers are balanced must be established by holding thorough labor-management discussions.

[注] rectify 「～を改正する」; amid 「～の真っ最中に」; curb 「～を抑制する」;  
fiscal 「年度」; plague 「～を悩ます」; paid holiday 「有給休暇」

[設問]

問1 下線部①～④の語の意味を、当該の文脈において最も正しく表している日本語を次のア～エから一つずつ選べ。

① case

(ア) 真相

(ウ) 事例

(イ) 訴訟

(エ) 症例

② management

(ア) 経営学

(ウ) 管理

(イ) 操縦

(エ) 経営陣

③ terms

(ア) 条件

(ウ) 学期

(イ) 期間

(エ) 用語

④ oblige

(ア) 恩義を施す

(ウ) 願いに応じる

(イ) 義務づける

(エ) 要求する

問2 空所(A)～(D)にふさわしい語を、次のア～エからそれぞれ一つずつ選びなさい。

( A )

(ア) to (イ) without (ウ) despite (エ) from

( B )

(ア) see (イ) find (ウ) predict (エ) meet

( C )

(ア) leaving (イ) keeping (ウ) letting (エ) having

( D )

(ア) in (イ) of (ウ) on (エ) from

問3 文脈に合った意味を表す英文になるように、下線部(1)の [ ] 内にある語句を正しく並べ替え、3番目と6番目にくる語句を答えよ。

問4 下線部(2)に“This”とあるが、これについての説明として適切なものを、次の(ア)～(エ)のうちから一つ選べ。

(ア) karoshi line decides the upper limit of overwork allowed

(イ) karoshi line is used to decide whether a worker died by overwork

(ウ) karoshi line is defined through careful analysis and consideration

(エ) karoshi line is considered to deny temporary increases in workloads

問5 下線部(3)を和訳せよ。

問6 本文について正しく述べているものを、次の(ア)～(エ)から一つ選べ。

(ア) One of the urgent tasks in society is to practice working long hours.

(イ) Diversity in workforce can increase company's creativity.

(ウ) A “highly professional” work system is denied by working-hour regulations.

(エ) A system of equal pay for equal work will be terminated by fiscal 2020.